

Remarks/Arguments:

Preliminary Matters

Claims 1-21, 23-152, and 154 are presently pending in the above-identified application. By this amendment, claims 1, 23, 24, 52, 82, 88, 114, 132, 135, 137, and 154 have been amended. Support for the claim amendments can be found throughout the originally filed specification. For example, see page 43, line 18 - page 44, line 26. Applicant contends that no new matter is added. Reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Section four of the Office Action recites that "Claims 1, 4, 15, 23, 24, 54, 66, 88, 114, 132, 135, 138, 146, 152, 153, and 154 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being anticipated by Howell in view of Editor & Publisher Vol. 126, Iss. 24 Page 62 (Hereafter E&P)." Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable over Howell and E&P for at least the reasons set forth below.

Independent claim 1 recites features that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Howell and E&P. Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a semiconductor and includes the following features:

- a memory;
- a vending equipment interface for connecting the semiconductor to a vending machine; an interactive interface for connecting the semiconductor to a computing platform; and
- a micro processing unit interconnected with the vending equipment interface, the interactive interface, and the memory that constructs and manages a vending machine transaction string in the memory, the vending machine transaction string comprising data fields, the micro processing unit configured to update the data fields to record vending machine transactions received through the vending equipment interface, the micro processing unit configurable in at least two different configurations responsive to commands received from the computing platform via the interactive interface, the at least two different configurations including a first configuration in which vending machine transaction data is automatically communicated to the computing platform responsive to an update to the vending machine transaction string and a second

configuration in which vending machine transaction data is communicated to the computing platform responsive to a request from the computing platform.

This means that the semiconductor includes an interactive interface interconnected with the micro processing unit. The micro processing unit communicates vending machine transactions received through the vending equipment interface to a computing platform (via the interactive interface) responsive to commands received from the computing platform. The micro processing unit is configurable in at least two configurations to communicate vending machine transaction data to the computing platform. In the first configuration, vending machine transaction data is automatically communicated to the computing platform responsive to an update to a vending machine transaction string. In a second configuration, vending machine transaction data is communicated to the computing platform responsive to a request from the computing platform.

As recited at pg. 43, ln. 18 - pg. 44, ln. 27 of applicant's specification, the micro processing unit is configurable in a configuration that automatically communicates transactions from the vending machine to a computing platform in response to a change in the vending machine transaction string. In this configuration, the computing platform does not need to poll the vending machine to determine whether card data or the vending machine transaction string status has changed - the transaction data will be sent automatically to the computing platform when it does. The micro processing unit is also configurable a second configuration that communicates transactions from the vending machine to a computing platform in response to a request from the computing platform.

Howell relates to a wide area network (WAN) of vending machines that are connected to a host that builds a database of vending related information received from the vending machines (see Abstract). Howell describes at column 6, lines 49-60 and illustrates in FIGs. 4A-4D, 5A-5E, and 6A-6E that a data structure having data elements can be used in the memory of a data warehouse. Howell discloses that the data elements represent sets of prediction information and refill-visit information for a particular vending machine. Howell, however, fails to describe a "micro processing unit configurable in at least two different configurations responsive to commands received from the computing platform via the interactive interface, the at least two different configurations including a first configuration in which vending machine transaction data is automatically communicated to

the computing platform responsive to an update to the vending machine transaction string and a second configuration in which vending machine transaction data is communicated to the computing platform responsive to a request from the computing platform.”

Furthermore, the data structure disclosed in Howell is not a vending machine transaction string that includes a string of data fields that are implemented within memory. The vending machine transaction string, as claimed, includes data fields that are constructed in memory and each field is updated by the micro processing to record vending machine transactions. Howell, however, is devoid of data fields in a string implemented in memory such as the vending machine transaction string.

E&P relates to cashless newsracks and the use of “smart cards” for cashless transactions. E&P, however, fails to disclose, teach, or suggest a micro processing unit that is configurable in at least two different configurations. More specifically, E&P fails to disclose, teach, or suggest that the micro processing unit is configurable in at least 1) a first configuration in which vending machine transaction data is automatically communicated to the computing platform responsive to an update to the vending machine transaction string and 2) a second configuration in which vending machine transaction data is communicated to the computing platform responsive to a request from the computing platform.

Because Howell and E&P each fail to disclose, teach, or suggest features recited in claim 1, applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 as obvious over Howell and E&P is respectfully requested. Claims 4, 15, 22, 24, 54, 66, 88, and 114 include all the features of claim 1 from which they ultimately depend. Accordingly, applicant submits that claims 4, 15, 22, 24, 54, 66, 88, and 114, are also allowable for at least the reasons that claim 1 is allowable.

Independent claim 132, as amended, while not identical to claim 1, recites features similar to claim 1. Accordingly, applicant submits that claim 132 is also allowable for at least the reasons amended claim 1 is allowable, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 132 as obvious over Howell and E&P is respectfully requested. Claims 135, 138, 146, 152, and 154 include all the features of claim 132 from which they ultimately depend. Accordingly, applicant submits that claims 135, 138, 146, 152, and 154 are also allowable for at least the reasons that claim 132 is allowable.

Section five of the Office Action recites that "Claims 5, 82, 136, and 137 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Howell in view of E&P." Claims 5 and 82 depend directly from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1, and claims 136 and 137 depend directly from claim 132 and include all of the features of claim 132. As set forth above, Howell and E&P fails to disclose, teach, or suggest every feature of claims 1 and 132. As claims 5, 82, 136, and 137 include all the features of claims 1 and 132, Howell and E&P fails to disclose, teach, or suggest every feature of claims 5, 82, 136, and 137. Accordingly, applicant contends that claims 5, 82, 136, and 137 are allowable and, therefore, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5, 82, 136, and 137.

Section six of the Office Action recites that "Claims 18 and 149 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Howell in view of E&P and Squires (U.S. Patent 7,032,038 B1)." Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are presently allowable over Howell, E&P, and Squires for at least the following reasons. Claim 18 depends directly from claim 1 and includes all of the features and limitations of claim 1. Claim 149 depends directly from claim 132 and includes all of the features and limitations of claim 132. The feature that was found to be lacking in Howell and E&P with respect to claims 18 and 149 is not found in Squires. Thus, Squires fails to make up for the deficiencies of Howell and E&P. Accordingly, applicant contends that claims 18 and 149 are allowable and, therefore, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 18 and 149.

Section seven of the Office Action recites that "Claim 52 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Howell in view of E&P and Miller et al. (U.S. Patent 5,959,869)." Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are presently allowable over Howell, E&P, and Miller et al. for at least the following reasons. Claim 52 depends directly from claim 1 and includes all of the features and limitations of claim 1. The feature that was found to be lacking in Howell and E&P with reference to claims 52 is not found in Miller, namely, "the micro processing unit configurable in at least two different configurations responsive to commands received from the computing platform via the interactive interface, the at least two different configurations including a first configuration in which vending machine transaction data is automatically communicated to the computing platform responsive to an update to the vending machine transaction string and a second configuration in which vending machine transaction data is communicated to the computing platform responsive to a request from the computing platform." Thus, Miller fails to make

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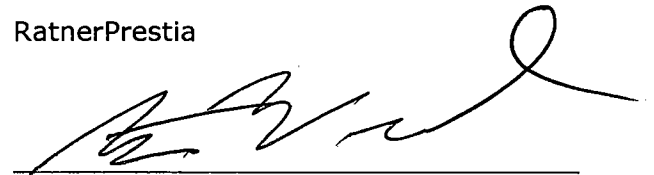
up for the deficiencies of Howell and E&P. Accordingly, applicant contends that claim 52 is allowable and, therefore, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 52.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicant submits that this application is now in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

RatnerPrestia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen J. Weed', is written over a horizontal line.

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